

**Testimony of**  
**THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT**  
**(CHCACT)**  
**Before**  
**The Appropriations Committee**  
**regarding the Department of Social Services Budget**  
**Presented by**  
**Evelyn A. Barnum, J.D., Chief Executive Officer**  
**February 17, 2012**

The Community Health Center Association of Connecticut has the privilege of working with all Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) in Connecticut. FQHCs provide critical access to and high quality primary care and preventive services to patients in underserved areas of our state regardless of ability to pay. They are a large and absolutely critical component of Connecticut's health care delivery system. In 2011, 14 health centers in the state combined cared for over 328,485,000 unduplicated users and provided well over one and a half million visits.

**The demand for FQHC services is steadily increasing:** In 2010, uninsured patient visits AT Connecticut FQHCs reached over 289,895. In 2011, Connecticut FQHCs cared for approximately 87,000 uninsured and provided approximately 330,000 visits to these uninsured patients.

Medicaid patients make up nearly 50 % of the population of patients served by FQHCs. FQHCs provide a tremendous portion of the primary care medical services, the behavioral health services and the dental services that are provided through the Medicaid program.

**The reimbursement to FQHCs for their services cannot decrease** through eligibility and benefit changes, cuts to their DPH funding for services to the uninsured and increased demand on their resources for practice transformation and Person Centered Medical Home requirements.

- Changes in the HUSKY D program will directly impact FQHC revenues. The FQHCs care for a patient population that will be unable to pay for the care they receive even on the sliding fee scale FQHCs make available. The result will be greater losses for each patient visit.
- The proposed Medicaid changes in the DSS budget, combined with reduction of over \$666,000 in the DPH funding for FQHC services to the uninsured, will decrease revenues beyond what the FQHCs will be able to absorb. Health centers "take all comers" regardless of the patient's ability to pay. The patients who have relied on health centers for many years and new patients, who seek out their services, will receive services

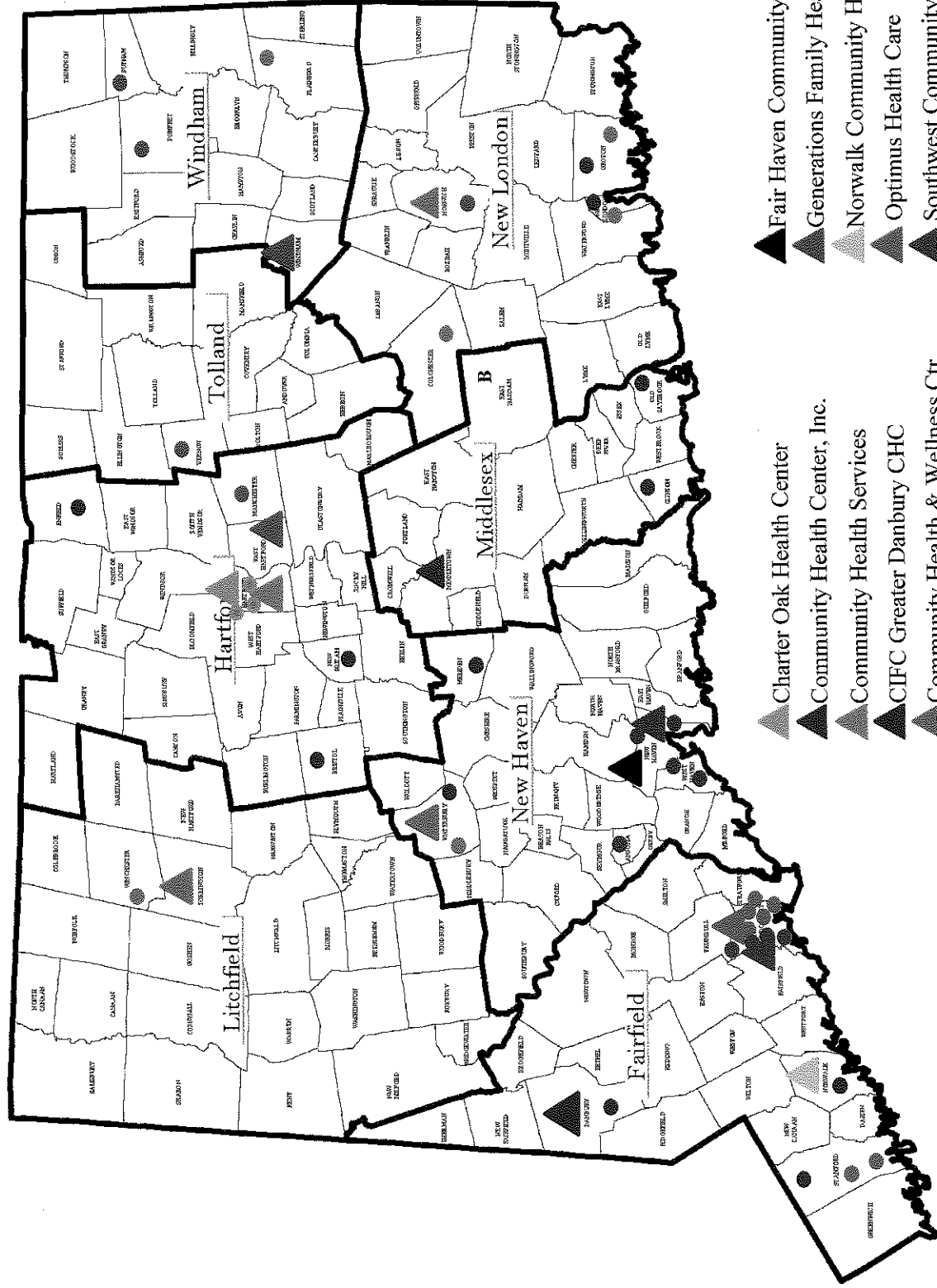
live in medically underserved areas or because they are uninsured or covered by Medicaid.<sup>2</sup>

FQHCs are well recognized for the important role they play in the health care delivery system and as Connecticut implements health reform and moves toward 2014. The FQHCs are deeply concerned that the General Assembly has an unrealistic expectation of the ability of health centers to absorb the proposed budget cuts in either DSS or DPH. CHCACT's member community health centers are very appreciative of the General Assembly's past support and ongoing interest in preserving the statewide system of care that health centers offer Connecticut's neediest children and families. In this time of state and federal budget cuts, the demand on FQHC services remains tremendous. On behalf of the patients and families currently served by FQHCs, we ask that the Committee not allow the cuts to FQHC funding that are currently proposed or the benefits changes that will over-stress and destabilize the FQHC infrastructure which is so critical to public health at a time when Connecticut citizens --in ever increasing numbers-- are turning to the safety net.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid

# Connecticut's Federally Qualified Health Centers\*



- ▲ Fair Haven Community Health Center
- ▲ Generations Family Health Center
- ▲ Norwalk Community Health Center
- ▲ Optimus Health Care
- ▲ Southwest Community Health Center
- ▲ StayWell Health Center
- ▲ United Community & Family Services
- ▲ Charter Oak Health Center
- ▲ Community Health Center, Inc.
- ▲ Community Health Services
- ▲ CFC Greater Danbury CHC
- ▲ Community Health & Wellness Ctr. of Greater Torrington
- ▲ Cornell Scott-Hill Health Center
- ▲ East Hartford Community HealthCare

\*14 corporations, over 40 full service sites.

# CHCACT Member Service Areas

